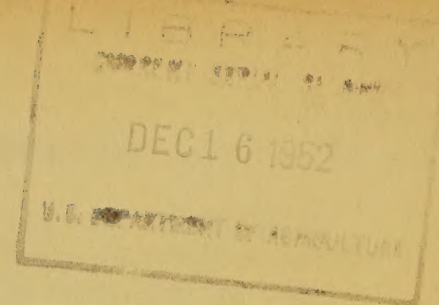


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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Rural Electrification Administration
Washington 25, D. C.



October 9, 1951

To : All REA Employees
From : Claude R. Wickard, Administrator
Subject : Action on Suggestions of Headquarters Staff

This report is to inform you what action has been taken on the suggestions and "gripes" submitted at the Washington Staff Conference last February. Your comments and suggestions have been thoughtful and significant and worthy of full consideration. Accordingly, each of them has been carefully considered by the Efficiency Awards Committee which has the responsibility of reviewing all suggestions and making recommendations as to what course of action should be followed. There is a representative from each division on this Committee. I have accepted all the recommendations of the Committee. In matters where REA action is not practical or possible, I believe you will find the Committee's explanations helpful.

I want to encourage every employee of REA to participate actively in striving to improve our management practices by taking every available opportunity to submit ideas and suggestions on how we can do a better job.

Claude R. Wickard

Course in letter writing for new employees (Office of Admin. -2)

The Training Section recognizes the need of secretarial and supervisory training in letter composition. In the past we have not been staffed to handle this activity but it is expected that such training will be provided in the near future.

Providing a Central Eating Place for Persons who bring Lunches from home.
(Off. of Admin. 4)

Such central eating places are now provided since anyone may use the cafeterias which are situated about the building whether he buys his food or not. To go beyond this and convert conference rooms into eating places would create problems that more than offset the advantages to be gained. Moreover, there is no regulation preventing an employee from eating lunch at his desk provided his eating there does not interfere with the work of the office.

Notifying Cooperatives of Clearance of Installation Notes: Preparation of Form Letter FI-258 (A & A-3)

Form letter FI-258 is now being prepared by the Collections & Custodial Section and forwarded to the Section offices for signature and mailing. Since this is a form letter in which certain data are inserted and the volume is not great, we believe that the present procedure should remain in effect. Also, this will assure that all letters are prepared in case the FI-267 notice is misplaced.

Establishing Procedure for Approval of the Purchase Price of Acquisitions
(A & A)

The responsibility for approval of the purchase price of acquisition rests with the Applications and Loans Division in accordance with Administrative Bulletins Nos. 62, 69, and 75. However, the amount established should not be advanced until clearance in writing is received from the Office of the Solicitor. It is felt that the Administrative Bulletins clearly define responsibility for this activity.

Establishing procedure for processing of the inventory of acquisitions (A&A)

Inventories received in the division in connection with acquisitions are for establishing the costs on the records of the borrowers and are not for the advance of funds. These inventories should be transmitted to the field at the time of an audit for the purpose of establishing accurate plant records. The Accounting and Auditing Division is preparing a memorandum in detail.

Keeping population records on which travel allowances are based up to date
(Engr. - 2)

The Accounting and Auditing Division in its memorandum dated March 1, 1951, provided a current list of cities having a population of over 50,000. This list was based on the preliminary census report and will be amended, if necessary, when the final census figures are released.

Periodic Redistribution of office workers according to Sectional workload
(Engr. -5)

This is a worthwhile suggestion which the Engineering Division indicates will be followed more closely in the future than it has in the past. Any division not now having a program of periodic workload studies and personnel distribution based on such studies should give consideration to the intent of the suggestion.

Preparing and sending telegrams early (Engr. -7a)

This suggestion again calls to our attention the desirability of having telegrams prepared and dispatched before 3:00 p.m. If the bulk of telegrams sent out of REA do not arrive at the Telegraph Office of Plant and Operations until nearly closing time, it is obvious that employees there will have to work overtime in order to get them out. It is recognized, however, that circumstances do not always permit early preparation and dispatch of telegrams, and the Telegraph Office under such conditions will accept messages until late in the day. All supervisors should make an effort to send telegrams out early so that the privilege of late dispatching in emergency situations will not be jeopardized.

Need for divisional messenger and greater utilization of the mail
Clerks (Engr. -7b)

The situation referred to concerning the carrying of forms to and from the office in question reflected a temporary and urgent condition.

It would not be desirable to utilize the divisional mail clerks on a regular basis for messenger service although there may of course be times when this is necessary. It should not, however, become a regular practice. The Administrative Services Division indicates that the services of a messenger may be obtained, under urgent circumstances, by calling extension 3136 or 2733.

Typing requisitions for field engineers' supplies (Eng. -8)

Field engineers and other field representatives generally do not have access to catalogs or other references from which requisitions can be prepared properly. In order that we may comply with established Departmental regulation procedures, it appears advisable to proceed as we have in the past. Studies are in process which when completed may help to alleviate the situation described.

Lack of equipment (Eng. -10)

Over the past year, there have been many instances of offices not being able to obtain all the equipment considered necessary to their proper functioning. In particular, desks, tables, supply cabinets, bookcases, etc., have been in short supply, and the prospects for improvement are not optimistic in view of the defense effort. As a result of recent office moves, the requirements of the Technical Operations and Maintenance Section were met. Possible future office changes may make additional equipment available to meet other present shortages.

Field trips for office engineers. Interchanging office and field assignments
(Engr.-12)

The Chief of the Engineering Division indicates that consideration will be given to request from Section Engineers to permit office engineers to make occasional trips to the field as travel funds permit for the purpose of becoming more familiar with that phase of the work of the Division.

It would not be practicable to interchange office and field assignments for short periods of the time since it takes months for a new engineer to familiarize himself with all of the problems in the area of a field engineer. It is believed that such an interchange arrangement would not provide the best working relationships with borrowers.

Revision of Form DS-208. Sheet of instructions for new forms (Engr.-13)

In accordance with this suggestion, the revision of REA Form DS-208 is now under consideration. The sheet of instructions to accompany new forms is a good suggestion and will be followed wherever possible.

More emphasis on the REA Suggestion Program and greater participation by personnel (Mgt.-1a)

We are in complete agreement with this suggestion and wish to underline our interest in receiving employee suggestions and ideas on better ways of doing things. Steps have been taken to stimulate employees' participation in the REA Suggestion Program. The Efficiency Awards Committee now has an Executive Secretary who will devote as much time as is required to the administration of the program. The recent installation of new suggestion boxes and posters reflects our intent to place greater emphasis on employee participation in improving the management and operations of REA.

A Definite Time Schedule and Follow-up for the Processing of Suggestions (Mgt.1b)

A time schedule for processing suggestions is not always practicable. Some have wider application or are more complex than others and may require the attention of other divisions or agencies.

Suggestions will be collected from the suggestion boxes by the Secretary of the Efficiency Awards Committee at least twice a month. All suggestions will be acknowledged as soon as they are received. Employees will be advised periodically of what progress is being made with their suggestions and any reasons for delay; and they will be promptly notified of the recommendations of the Committee.

Expediting Electric Retail Rate Correspondence to REA Borrowers (Mgt.-2)

An evaluation of the situation indicates that a redistribution of the workload among the clerical force of the Section offices will expedite the correspondence which is requested by the Electric Retail Rate Section in reference to rates for REA borrowers. Further study is being made of this problem and additional information will be forthcoming shortly. The Personnel

Division has been contacted regarding the possibility of obtaining part-time assistance to help the present clerical staff in handling this work.

Use of a Form Letter to Follow-up on Minutes of Board Meetings (Mgt.-3)

Several sections have devised a form letter for follow-up in cases where borrowers have overlooked the submission of minutes of board meetings. Other sections consider it very desirable to send individual letters to the borrowers. It has been recommended that wherever possible, in order to reduce the workload on the part of the secretarial force, a form letter be used. However, this procedure is being left up to the discretion of the Section Heads. A form letter is available and a supply can be obtained from the Assistant to the Chief.

Advancement opportunities and use of understudies for analyst jobs (Mgt.4-5)

The Management Division has felt for some time that certain positions within the division are so called "dead-end" jobs. In view of this condition, a review is being made of the organizational structure for the purpose of establishing, wherever possible, a promotional ladder. This review covers all positions within the division.

Meetings to discuss and work out mutual problems (Mgt.-6)

The Management Division has continuously encouraged the idea that various groups within the Division in identical positions hold monthly meetings to discuss and work out mutual problems pertaining to their work. The Division at this time reiterates its encouragement that such meetings be set up on a permanent basis with a Chairman and Secretary-Recorder and that periodic reports be forwarded to the Chief's office indicating in what way these groups can be assisted in doing a better job.

Minimum floor space of 85 sq. ft. per person (Power-1)

The Power Division's present space of 103 square feet per person is above the over-all average of REA. However, the Administrative Services Division plans to resurvey divisional space in the near future in order to effect possible adjustments caused by recent turnover of personnel.

Construction progress reports for Power Division (Power-3)

The need for a separate report on transmission construction programs is under reconsideration. We must be careful, however, not to impose on borrowers or engineers for more information than is absolutely necessary in carrying out our responsibilities.

Oral reports from employees upon returning from field assignments (Power-4)

This is a good suggestion and all employees upon returning from field assignments, should see that those concerned are fully informed by written reports, and when necessary, oral reports.

Shortage of stenographic help (Power-6)

It appears that the present shortage of stenographic help in REA as well as in other agencies will continue. Our Personnel Division is exerting every effort to attract new and retain present stenographic personnel. Each office may have to make special arrangements to compensate for stenographic shortages.

Discussing Administrative Bulletins with employees (Power-7)

All supervisors are encouraged to make a practice of discussing pertinent Administrative Bulletins with their staff. The Chief, Power Division holds staff conferences with Section Heads on Administrative Bulletins requiring additional clarification and the information is passed on to the section personnel by the Section Heads.

Wage Rate Information (Power-8)

The present arrangement of channeling all requests for wage rate information through one office in the Power Division should result in less confusion. Follow-up on specific wage rates are now handled by direct contact between the section concerned and the Labor Relations Office.

Announcing personnel actions (Power-9; Admin. Services)

It is up to each division chief to determine the desirability of announcing internal personnel actions. In most divisions such announcements are made at staff meetings. Where such meetings are attended only by supervisory employees, each supervisor should inform those working under him of any pertinent personnel actions in the division.

One drive a year for all charitable contributions (Power-11, Personnel-1)

Much thought and effort has been given to the idea of having all contributions for charitable purposes taken care of in one collection. However, up to the present time it has not been possible to achieve this.

Regrouping engineers in the Internal Combustion and Hydro Plants Section for more efficient operation (Power-14)

This suggestion has been put into effect.

Organization charts of Sections (Power-16)

The Power Division does not have an organizational breakdown of units within the various sections. A condensed organization chart was furnished each employee when the organization of the Power Division was changed in 1950. Copies of the divisional organization charts are available to employees. The detailed functions and activities of each section are not however included in these charts but are a part of the functions, activities, and procedures book of each division.

Guidelines for estimating wholesale power costs (Power-17)

All policy questions not adequately or fully answered in administrative or divisional bulletins should be submitted to the office of the chief of the division. The division chief or his assistants will either give an interpretation of established policy or will submit orally or in writing the question to the Administrator's office. Administrative determination will then be made and the decision given to the Office of the Chief which, in turn, will pass the information to the appropriate section.

There are certain instances where particular problems do not lend themselves to general policy. These problems have to be analyzed on their individual merit and the facts presented. The example of estimating average wholesale power costs over a 35-year period is a problem with peculiarities to each individual borrower concerned. Determinations of power cost estimates to be used will continue to be considered on an individual basis for the borrowers concerned. However, where administrative determination is required for a particular borrower, it will be expedited by following the procedure mentioned above.

Placing candidate's names on job advertisements (Admin. Services-1)

The Personnel Division follows the policy outlined in Administrative Bulletin 49-R1 in filling all vacancies. When the Chief of the Personnel Division and the Chief of the Division concerned concur that there is only one logical choice the name of that person will appear in the bulletin. This practice has not been discontinued at any time since the policy was put into effect.

A longer time to apply for vacancies (Admin. Services-2)

We cannot recommend that a longer time than three days be given for applying for vacancies when a job is advertised to the Washington staff only; nor longer than ten days when the advertisement is applicable to field personnel. A longer period would make too great a lapse of time between the day the vacancy occurs and the day it is filled. As a general rule when a vacancy is first known, it is necessary for the division in which the vacancy occurs to prepare and submit a Form 52 requesting that the vacancy be filled. This form is then processed through several different offices before it is ready for advertising. A stencil must then be cut and it is usually a day or two, sometimes longer, before the advertisement is distributed to the staff.

Adding three or ten days more to this, plus preparation of a register, interviews, and a reasonable period before announcement of the person selected, all adds up to make a wide gap between the time the vacancy occurs and the time when it is filled. Any further widening of this gap would jeopardize the practicability of advertising vacancies at all, in our opinion. Supervisors are requested to see that personnel bulletins are given immediate distribution in the offices in which they have such responsibility, and employees are urged to make prompt reply.

Usually two to four days pass from the time of the closing date to the time of the selection, and we would not refuse to accept an application from a qualified employee during this period.

Clear, concise writing assignments giving reasons for any major changes
(Info. Services-1)

In response to the first part of this suggestion, the practice of providing all major assignments in written form will be tried. Writers are urged to follow through on their copy and to ask their supervisor about changes. The desirability of pointing out reasons for changes is generally recognized as a means of improving the work.

Regular staff meeting with an advance agenda (Info. Services-2)

Information Services Division staff meetings have now been scheduled for every other Monday morning and the suggestion regarding the use of formal agenda will be tried out.

Stricter adherence to promotion-from-within-policy (Info. Services -3)

The promotion-from-within-policy is adhered to strictly. This means that full consideration is given to present employees. It does not mean, however, that selections are made solely on the basis of REA employment.

Preparing clean and readable rough drafts (Info. Services-4)

Greater care can be given without undue loss of time to editing and writing to keep drafts legible. Typist should remember, however, that the purpose of retyping is to obtain readable copy. If the writer prepares a legible draft, time spent on retyping will be minimized.

Supplying "live" human interest background material on the co-ops
(Info. Services-5)

We should like to underscore this suggestion. "Live", human interest stories about what co-ops are doing are particularly needed if we are to present adequately the contributions that rural electric co-ops are making to improve rural living, to aid local communities to help in the defense effort, and in other beneficial ways which assist the national welfare.

Everyone who comes into contact, either directly or indirectly, with any examples, stories or background material that may be helpful to the Information Services Division is encouraged to bring it to the attention of that Division.

Mobilizing the Co-ops for national defense (Info. Services-6)

The REA program has an important role to play in helping rural people provide themselves with electricity and telephones. This, of course, is particularly significant during this mobilization period when agriculture is expected to produce more efficiently and with less manpower. It is the responsibility of everyone connected with the REA program to assist to the best of his ability in providing these essential services.

Grading of the positions in the Information Services Division

(Info. Services-7)

The grades of the positions in the Information Services Division are established in accordance with Civil Service Commission standards. Furthermore a review of many of the positions in Information Services Division was made within the past two years by the Civil Service Commission and at that time the Commission found that in most instances the descriptions of the work performed were accurate and the positions properly graded. REA is unable to determine whether some other agencies give higher grades than REA for work of comparable difficulty and responsibility. Grades for information people in REA are in line with comparable jobs in the Department of Agriculture generally.

Supply cabinet in the Classification Office. (Personnel-2)

As a result of this suggestion a supply cabinet has been obtained for the Classification and Organization Section.

Paper cutter for the Stenographic Pool (Personnel-4)

If the Head of the Stenographic Unit believes a paper cutter is needed, it is suggested that a requisition be submitted to the Administrative Service Division.

More legible writing of work given the Stenographic Unit (Personnel-5)

We are in full agreement that more care needs to be taken by everyone who prepares rough drafts for typing. It is recommended that whenever the Stenographic Unit receives material that is illegible they return it for refinement to eliminate any hardships or waste of time. As an aid to the typist include the name and phone number of the person to be contacted for further information.

Need for obtaining travel authorization in less than 5 days (Tech. Stds-3)

The need for improvement in the method of obtaining travel authorization is recognized. Considerable work has already been done, and a tentative procedure has been developed which should permit the obtaining of travel authorizations in two days without hand-carrying. It is hoped that the new procedure will be put into effect in the near future.

Establishing a uniform and centralized method for handling outside requests for publications (Tech. Stds. -4)

The Information Services Division generally handles the distribution of what might be regarded as popular literature--that which is generally ordered by the borrowers in bulk quantities or for which there is considerable demand from the general public. Divisional memoranda and administrative materials go out initially on mailing codes selected by the originating division. Follow-up distribution of this letter material is generally handled by the originating divisions since such material goes largely to borrowers and cannot be handled routinely but ordinarily requires an explanatory letter.

Some of the Technical Standards reports may not fit precisely into either of these categories. We note that of late several of these reports have been included as enclosures with memoranda of the line divisions. Presumably that takes care of the distribution problem on those. If there are in addition certain Technical Standards reports for which there is some public demand and which can be handled routinely without technical correspondence, the Information Services Division will, on request, handle such distribution.

Less delay in handling technical material (Tech. Stds.-5)

Adequate controls are maintained for follow-up by the originating office in the Technical Standards Division on all technical material that has not been returned within a reasonable period of time. Employees are urged to make every effort to meet specified due-dates. Where there are differences of opinion in regard to the contents of the technical issuances, meetings are arranged.

Short courses for stenographic personnel on the technical phase of their work (Tech. Stds.-6)

The Training Section of the Personnel Division is preparing material for use by the various divisions in providing such training assistance.

Positive statement to REA personnel giving all facts available on the moving or decentralization of REA (Tech. Stds.-7)

The Gripe sessions were held before an announcement by the Bureau of the Budget, listing the agencies which would be asked to decentralize all or part of their activities. There is no indication at this time that REA will be involved in any decentralization plans.

Technical seminars on the telephone program (Tech. Stds.-9)

Meetings have been held by Technical Standards, Applications and Loans and Personnel Divisions to discuss the need for such training. To date telephone seminars have been given to the members of the Applications and Loans Division. Any divisions desiring such seminars should make requests through the Training Section, Personnel Division.

Introduction of Newcomers (Office of Administrator-1)

It is certainly desirable that all new employees be promptly introduced throughout their sections as soon as they are assigned. It is recommended that this practice be followed in all offices in order that employees might become better acquainted with their fellow workers.

Assumption Notes (A&A)

The Office of Solicitor and others have for some time been aware of this problem and of the need to speed up the process of consumating inter-cooperative transfers. Studies have been undertaken on this matter and an Administrative Bulletin is being prepared to establish new procedures. It is anticipated that such inter-cooperative transfers will be put on production control to insure expeditious handling.

Legal Fees (A&A)

Field personnel should devote as much time as practicable to assisting the borrowers and their attorneys in expediting the submission of right-of-way proof required to justify final payment for legal fees. Furthermore, cooperatives should be cautioned against making payments out of general funds for services in connection with obtaining easement proofs. It should be kept in mind it is the borrower who is primarily responsible for obtaining a proper and legally valid right-of-way for its system.

It would seem that no significant purpose can be served by compiling the number of easement proofs received in the first five years of REA as compared with those received in the last ten.

Face Act Extension Agreements (A&A)

Face Act transactions constitute currently a very small volume of workload. To date, 642 transactions had been approved by the Administrator and all of these had been processed to completion.

Complaint of having to do other work when current typing is up to date (A&A)
When a secretary or another typist goes on extended leave, one typist is left with all the work (A&A)

These two gripes express different sides of the same problem of an ever fluctuating workload. The day to day job of any office does not constantly remain the same; on some days there will be more work to be done than on others, and often times this cannot be handled by the regular staff. Such changes in the workload are unavoidable, and in order to meet them it is not always possible to take on additional personnel. Many of us will require help from time to time from other offices, and we in turn will be expected to help them out when necessary. Particularly with the current defense program and the need for us to do a bigger job with smaller staff, it becomes increasingly important that we help each other. There is no substitute for genuine cooperation which enables us to work together as a team in getting out the work that must be accomplished.

Form CO-150, Sale of Material (A&A)

An Administrative Bulletin on sale of property and assumption of indebtedness is being formulated to establish policy, responsibility, and procedure.

Telephone Service (A&L)

Action has been taken on this suggestion, and additional telephone lines have been provided to the personnel of the Applications and Loans Division working with the telephone program. Installation of buzzers has also been completed.

Overtime (A&L)

Whenever possible personnel who are expected to perform overtime work should be notified in advance of the actual day. However, circumstances in particular instances may prevent the giving of adequate notice.

Working Relations (A&L)

Arrangements have been made whereby the Management Division provides, on a regular basis, copies of current operating reports to the Applications and Loans Division.

Work Order Deletion (A&L)

Under the revised work order procedure, the work order records in the Applications and Loans Division referred to by this suggestion have been eliminated.

Assignments to the Field (Engineering-1)

No hard and fast rule can be laid down for any personnel as to the time when particular assignments to the field can be made. This time depends on the needs of the Agency, the availability of funds, and the progress made by the particular individual and his training and qualifications.

That a Committee be Appointed to Standardize Operating Procedures: That all Procedures be written in a handbook style (Engineering-3)

This is an excellent suggestion, and we are in full agreement with the objective. We have recognized existing deficiencies over a period of time and are working toward carrying out these ideas as soon and as rapidly as we can.

Lapse of Time in having Blueprints Made (Engineering-4)

Steps have been taken to improve this situation and apparently the duplicating time has been lessened as a result. In connection with the suggestion that a duplicating machine be made available for the use of the Engineering Division, Department practice provides as a general rule that all such work be done on a centralized basis rather than by each agency.

Filing System Could be Improved (Engineering-6, Management-7)

At the time this "gripe" was submitted the filing situation was not good and filing was delayed. However, the situation has improved and when the full filing staff is available, filing can be done approximately twice a week. The absence of file clerks, or lack of a substitute, may cause occasional delays in particular offices.

A review of the filing classification is made annually from the point of view of eliminating particular items which are obsolete or not used.

Where there is an accumulation of material to be filed it is sometimes necessary for the file clerk to take it to the Central Records Unit where there is special equipment. In this case, it may be necessary on occasion to take material out of the office for a short time in order to classify and file the material properly.

Reporting the Number of Hours Worked on Standard Form 1130 (Engineering-9)

Employees can only be paid on the basis of the regular 40 hours per week irrespective of the number of hours actually worked, except in those instances where overtime pay is authorized and approved by the Administrator. No particular advantage would be derived for payroll purposes by reporting hours in excess of the regular standard work day merely for the purpose of having such information on record. It is assumed that the field employees ordinarily submit reports of work performed to their supervisors, in addition to the Time and Attendance Reports. The allowance of compensatory time off in lieu of overtime pay is purely an administrative matter as provided in Administrative Bulletin 78.

Complaints about Lighting (Engineering-11)

The matter of improvement in effective lighting has been discussed with the building Superintendent, who has informed us that the General Services Administration has already made plans to install a considerable number of fluorescent lighting fixtures throughout Government Agencies. Work of this nature has been completed in one Department, and it is hoped that the Department of Agriculture will be the next department to be affected. In an effort to improve the lighting situation, REA has provided a substantial number of fluorescent desk lamps. Anyone who feels he has inadequate lighting should call it to the attention of the Administrative Services Division and steps will be taken to take care of the inadequacy.

In connection with the cleaning of light globes at the time that new bulbs are installed, we are informed that this is not possible due to the fact that the employee of the Electric Shop has no connection with the Labor Force and that there is insufficient Labor Force help to permit such cleaning.

A Better Scheduled Program of Building Service (Office of Admin.-3; Management-8)

The matter of improving building services has been discussed with the Building Superintendent. We have been informed that the General Services Administration is fully cognizant of the need for improved services such as cleaning of walls, floors, ceilings, windows, etc., but with the limited funds available for the payment of such services, it is impossible to maintain an adequate staff of personnel to improve the schedule. The Power Plant has taken steps to filter out much of the soot which has caused considerable dirt in the South Building.

Answers to Gripes Should be Definite (Power-12)

We fully agree with this suggestion and hope that our answers have followed it closely. A great deal of time and thought is given to

preparing satisfactory answers to your suggestions and whenever possible, affirmative action is taken on them. Every gripe is carefully considered and receives an answer.

Addressing Messenger Envelopes (Administrative Services-4)

In accordance with this suggestion all employees are urged to exercise more care in addressing messenger envelopes and to write legibly (printing would be preferable) the name of the individual to whom it is being sent, his division and room number. For example: Joe Doakes, Personnel Division, room 4037 S. (All previous addresses should be crossed out.)

Problem of Heat and Animal Odors in the Basement (Administrative Services-5)

Since the above suggestion was submitted, action has been taken to remove the source of animal odors in the Second Wing Basement area. With respect to the problem of heat, we must conform to policy with respect to the release of employees under such circumstances. The Building Superintendent informs us that no good solution for improvement can be given until an air conditioning system is approved for the South Building, and we have been informed that recommendations have been made for the installation of such a system.

Need for Overhauling Typewriters (Personnel-3)

We have undertaken an orderly process of sending machines to the General Services Administration for overhaul, and we shall continue to rehabilitate as many machines as is feasible. As a consequence, the general situation has improved.

Request for Better Ventilation More fans, (Personnel-6)

In reply to the request for additional fans, we have been informed by the Public Buildings Service that its policy is to provide only one fan for each bay. In the event that a bay does not have a fan installed or there are unusual conditions, it is requested that such information be transmitted to the Property and Space Management Section, Administrative Services Division, Extension 6255.

Noise in basement halls. Metal Wheels on cars-cleaning equipment (Personnel-8)

All messenger carts in use by REA are provided with rubber tires. A principal source of noise occurs in the rolling of dollies engaged in moving furniture and equipment. We have called this suggestion to the attention of the Public Building Service for their cooperation in minimizing noise in the halls.

Improved elevator service (Personnel-9)

The matter of improved elevator service has been discussed with the Building Superintendent. He is fully aware of the inconvenience and discomfort which exist, but feels that it is the best service possible in view of the limited number of operators available.

Providing divisional messengers (Information Services-8; Personnel-13)

The question of providing divisional messengers has been raised in the past by several divisions. If messengers were to be assigned to divisions, rather than to be centralized in a Mail Room as is now the case, a significant number of additional employees would be required to handle not only intra-divisional mail but also the present inter-divisional mail service; our present messengers not only cover their assigned routes five times daily but are called upon between runs to make special trips in the South and Administration Buildings. If messengers were assigned to specified divisional areas, no one would be available for special trips except through the addition of personnel.

Clearing of tables in basement cafeteria not done often enough.
Need for centrally located cigarette and change machines and ladies hose machine. (Personnel 10, 11, 12)

These suggestions have been referred to the REA representative to the USDA Welfare Association to be taken up at a meeting of this group.

Expedite handling requisitions of technical equipment (Technical Standards-10)

This matter has been fully discussed with officials of the Purchase, Sales, and Traffic Division of the Department, and every effort is being made to speed up requests for technical equipment ordered by the Technical Standards Division. It is recognized that these special items require preparation of specifications and bids, all of which need a longer period of time to process than for the procurement of standard equipment.

Staggering the working hours of the Department (Technical Standards-11)

This recommendation is beyond the scope of REA action. A similar suggestion made in November of last year received the following answer from appropriate authorities: "It is necessary to clear recommendations with the Bureau of the Budget which affect the hours of work of employees in the Washington area.....By having our employees start earlier, the bad congestion that already exists at the earlier times would only be made worse. The Budget Bureau advises that the Capital Transit Company, with which it checks these recommendations would for this reason object to our shifting to the proposed staggered schedule."

That some action be taken on the recently conducted traffic survey regarding traffic congestion about the South Building (Technical Standards-12)

This suggestion was forwarded to the Office of Plant and Operation. To date, significant actions have been taken to implement the traffic survey.

Soundproofing bookkeeping unit (A&A)

The reorganization of the Accounting and Auditing Division will probably take care of this condition. It is contemplated that most of the work now done on the bookkeeping machines will be done on tabulating equipment.

Promotion within the Division (A&A)

Under the promotion from within policy that has been in effect for a number of years, vacancies are advertised, and opportunity is given to all people who feel they are qualified to apply for positions and be considered.

Work Order Procedure (Power-2)

As soon as the revised work order procedure for distribution type borrowers is placed into effect, attention will be given to the special aspects of the procedure as it applies to power type borrowers.

Circulate list of anticipated field trips (Power-5)

The purpose of this suggestion is to enable other sections to present pertinent problems for travelers to discuss with borrowers to be visited. "When an office employee is scheduled to make a field trip, personnel of other sections in the division should be notified so that their problems can be presented to the traveler for discussion with cooperative.

"To the extent possible, this suggestion should be utilized throughout the organization to promote efficiency and cut down expense. However, no hard and fast rule can be laid down. In many cases it is not practical for an employee making a field trip to include in his visit items or conditions which require a specialized knowledge other than that which he possesses."

Submission of receipts with travel vouchers (Power-13)

The matter concerning the submission of official receipts with travel vouchers is prescribed by standard Government Travel Regulations and is not a matter of discretion for REA.

Sections "g" and "h" of paragraph 80 of the Government Travel Regulations relating to the requirement of receipts in support of charges for miscellaneous emergency expenditures and long distance telephone messages were amended effective August 10, 1951, to require receipts where the amount involved is in excess of \$3.00 instead of the previous \$1.00.

Paragraph 80 further provides: "If it is impracticable to furnish receipts in any case as above required, the failure to do so must be fully explained in the expense account. Mere inconvenience in the matter of taking receipts will not be considered".

Per Diem Rates (Power-15)

These rates were administratively determined after a survey was made of the varied conditions surrounding travel performed by REA employees. Field employees have recently been requested to submit actual expenses periodically in order to determine the adequacy of per diem rates. It is planned that a form will be sent to travelers in the near future requesting their information on travel expenses. Attention of travelers is called to the fact that they can obtain travel advances,

Parking spaces (Power-18)

The official responsibility for assigning of all space allocated by the Department, including parking space, has been delegated to the Administrative Services Division. To assure that assignments are being made in as equitable a manner as possible, the Administrative Services Division is requested to continue the practice of discussing periodically the method used in assigning parking spaces with the members of the Employee's Council on which the employees of each Division have elected a representative,

Processing travel vouchers (Personnel-7)

REA is limited in the number of employees available for voucher processing by regulations over which we have no control. Continuing analysis is being made of this operation. A very large part of the trouble stems from the fact that vouchers are not properly prepared on the initial presentment and more than normal time is thus required in the taking of exceptions and making of corrections. Employees can materially assist in correcting this condition by familiarizing themselves with travel regulations and by taking sufficient time to prepare the vouchers properly before submitting them for payment.

Organization of the telephone program (Technical Standards-1)

Coordination between telephone groups (Technical Standards-2)

Since these two suggestions were submitted, we feel that substantial progress has been made toward achieving better coordination of the telephone activities and better integration of these activities within the existing framework of the organization. However, additional studies are being made in this field to obtain even better coordination, and at the present time several suggestions are under consideration which we hope will achieve these objectives.

We feel that the difficulties cited in the relations of Engineering and Technical Standards Divisions have been satisfactorily resolved, and that the respective responsibilities of the two divisions have been definitely established.